



WHITTLE SCHOOL & STUDIOS HUMANITIES 200, 10TH GRADE

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Project Cycle 4 2019-2020

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IMPORTANT LINKS

FACULTY

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SITES

[Buzz](#)

[RingCentral Classes](#)

[MLA Formatting and Style Guide](#)



HUMANITIES PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Humanities is the study of human society and culture with a focus on historical empathy, critical theory and analysis, and the craft of writing. As humanists at Whittle School & Studios, it is our intention to explore the intersections of global and local communities as they relate to history, languages, literature, art, film, music, philosophy, human geography, politics, diplomacy and more. Using rhetoric and creative problem solving, the Whittle Humanities program seeks to develop and support young intellects, aesthetics and voices, both creative and academic.

TENTH-GRADE PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

All sections of the tenth-grade humanities program explore the critical and creative-aesthetic inquiry habit of mind through the analysis and production of critical and creative works with a focus on United States history, literature and other artforms. Each section introduces students to the conventions and requirements of specific written forms — critical theory and essay analysis, historical documents, fiction, creative nonfiction and poetry, film, art and more. Through close reading, critical analysis, and the practice of writing, students will study the crafts of reading, writing and rhetoric — the techniques, strategies and conventions a writer employs to produce meaning and to elicit readers’ engagement with emphasis on the study of historical, literary and other forms interpreted through the mode of critical and creative-aesthetic inquiry developed in this program. Moreover, through seminars and lectures that follow a Socratic method, students will explore the most important intellectual currents and historical processes of United States history, which will both allow them to appreciate the historical genesis of the society they live in and foster the kind of empathy that is necessary to transcend their local loyalties and to imagine alternative worlds.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of the tenth-grade humanities program, students will be able to:

- Identify and describe eras, events and artforms within United States power dynamics, ideologies and progressions from 1450 to the present.
- Analyze and excavate patterns of human behavior that are similar across time and space, while extracting artistic expressions and intellectual currents that are historically unique.
- Juxtapose, evaluate and integrate multiple political, ideological or artistic perspectives to similar phenomena.
- Describe and analyze, through the completion of craft analyses, response papers, and oral presentations, the formal and structural components of critical essays and creative works.
- Engage with creative and technical/mechanical processes of the literary arts, including assessing the aesthetic value of creative texts and the significance of the authorial decisions therein, by completing in-class close readings of model texts as well as written and full-class live critiques of peer writing.

PRIMARY TEXTS

- Friedman, *Next Hundred Years* (2008)
- Fukuyama, “End of History” (1989)
- Gorden-Reed, “America’s Original Sin” (2018)
- Hong Kingston, Maxine. *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts*. Vintage, 1976.

- Inglehart, “Inequality and Modernization” (2016)
- McCarthy, Cormac. *The Road*. Knopf, 2006.
- Mead, “The Jacksonian Revolt” (2017)
- Morrison, Toni. *Beloved*. Vintage, 2004.
- Nichols, “How America lost faith in expertise” (2017)
- Piketty, “Rise of Sanders” (2016)
- Schell, “China’s Cover-up” (2018)
- Various Short Stories and Poems TBA.
- Williams, “Abortion and Guns” (2017)
- Zinn, Walter. *A People’s History of the United States*. Harper Perennial, 1980.

SECONDARY (RESOURCE) TEXTS

- “MLA Formatting and Style Guide.” *Purdue Online Writing Lab*, owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_works_cited_electronic_sources.html. Accessed 23 February 2020.
- Bronner, Stephen Eric. *Critical Theory: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Burroway, Janet, Elizabeth Stuckey-French and Ned Stuckey-French. *Writing Fiction: A Guide to Narrative Craft*. 10th ed., The University of Chicago Press, 2019.
- Hamilton, Sharon. *Essential Literary Terms*. 2nd ed., Norton, 2017.
- *MLA Handbook: Eighth Edition*. The Modern Language Association of America, 2016.
- O’Connor, Patricia. *Woe Is I: The Grammarphobe’s Guide to Better English in Plain English*. 4th ed., Riverhead Books, 2019.
- Truss, Lynne. *Eats, Shoots & Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation*. Avery, 2003.

CRITICAL READING

With an eye toward **critical theories**—Moral Criticism, Dramatic Construction (~360 BC-Present); Structuralism/Semiotics (1920s-present); Formalism (1930s-present); New Criticism/Neo-Aristotelian (1930s-present); Psychoanalytic Criticism, Jungian Criticism(1930s-present); Lacanian Criticism (1930s to present); Marxist Criticism (1930s-present); Reader-Response Criticism (1960s-present); Feminist Criticism (1960s-present); Ecocriticism (1960s to present); Postmodernism/Post-Structuralism/ Deconstruction (1966-present); Gender/Queer Studies (1970s-present); Critical Race Theory (1970s to present)—students will read and/or view historical, literary, philosophical, political, cinematic, musical and more texts.

CRITICAL DISCUSSION

Immersed within the Socratic method, students will employ **rhetoric** and **critical theory** (please see below attached guides) to close readings and discussions of texts within the classroom.

WRITING A CRITICAL RESPONSE PAPER

Each week you are required to write and submit one critical response paper, of approximately 400 to 500 words. In addition to being exercises in your expository writing skills, these responses are opportunities for you to demonstrate your grasp of the assigned readings and the historical or artistic topics discussed in class. These papers are due the day before the next week’s first class by midnight (i.e., students who meet on Mondays should submit their work by Sunday, midnight. Students who meet on Tuesdays should submit by Monday, midnight). For the literary response papers, students should refer to the “Critical Theories: A Very Brief Primer.”

All critical response papers should be **MLA** formatted:

- Times New Roman, 12-point font;
- Double spaced, even between the title and first paragraph;
- Every paragraph indented .5;

- One-inch margins;
- Left justified heading with name, course, teachers and date;
- Number page two and forward, using your last name—i.e., “Bryant 2.” Right justify in the header;
- Periods and commas go inside ending quotation marks;
- Use a works cited list where appropriate;
- Three or more words must be parenthetically cited with last name and page number—i.e., Fitzgerald 23;
- See the attached **Critical Response Guide** for additional information on writing a critical response.

We will discuss **MLA** formatting in more depth in class. Use the **Purdue Online Writing Lab** for formatting your critical essays and works cited.

CREATIVE WRITING

Our goal will be to practice creative writing at least once each week. We will use our journals for this purpose. Please bring your journal to class every day. A physical journal such as a Moleskine is preferable. The act of handwriting can feel very different in process and thought than typing on a laptop. Our journals are sacred space. You will never be forced to share or read your journal entries. However, you will be given time and space in which to do so if you wish.

Creative writing is an intimate and vulnerable space. It is essential that we trust each other to make glorious mistakes, while bearing our interiorities. For this reason, please understand that we will always maintain a safe space. It is also important to remember that faculty members are mandatory reporters to our student counseling team should creative nonfiction raise concerns of safety for a student. This would, of course, be done without judgement and after talking with the student one on one, first.

PEER EDITING AND WORKSHOP PROCEDURES

Our goals in the workshop are to be honest, constructive and open to taking risks to improve our crafts. This will require time, patience, thought and courage. What you say and how you say it are both important. How you receive constructive criticism is important. The writer who is merely looking for confirmation of craft will find the workshop portions to be of little benefit.

When responding to peer work, read each piece at least twice. Focus on developmental needs (structure, context, cohesiveness) and mechanics (syntax, diction, punctuation, etc. Include an “end note,” or brief overall impression of what is working in the piece and what can be improved. Be specific. “Your language is really nice” or “This setting element doesn’t work” are too general. Give detailed examples as to why you had the reactions you did. Remember this is a reader’s response. You are one reader. There are many aesthetics, styles and reader preferences just as valuable as your own. Our goal as critical readers is to be “authentically curious”—i.e., what do you want to know more about the piece?

FOR EXAMPLE

Too general: “The characterization in this piece made me think more on my own characterizations.”

A good detailed reaction: “The writer gave vivid details about the protagonist. Instead of the usual hair and eye color, the writer focused on the protagonist’s hands, the length of the fingers, the lines and a scar. This gave me a more intimate view of the character and made me think the hands would be important later in the narrative, which was exactly the case. I will be more sensitive to finding intimate and active details when describing my characters in the future.”

SCHEDULE: PROJECT CYCLE 4 (1945 - FUTURE)

Focuses: Cold War, Civil Rights Movement, Liberal World Order, Future World Order, Imperialism,

Authoritarianism, Neo-Liberalism, Democracy, Historicism, Progress, Modernism, Post-Apocalyptic

WEEK 1: APRIL 6 – 10 — 1945-1970: ATOMIC WAR

- Reading: Zinn, Ch. 17, *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy
- Critical Response Writing: 400 to 500 word essay response to *The Road* (Prompt TBA)
- Creative Writing: 400 to 500 word response (prose, poetry or prose-poetry, prompt TBA)

WEEK 2: APRIL 13 – 17 — 1960-1980: CIVIL RIGHTS

- Reading: Zinn, Ch. 19, *Beloved* by Toni Morrison
- Critical Response Writing: 400 to 500 word essay response to *Beloved* (Prompt TBA)
- Creative Writing: 400 to 500 word response (prose, poetry or prose-poetry, prompt TBA)

WEEK 3: APRIL 20 – 24 — 1970-2016: NEO-LIBERALISM

- Reading: Fukuyama, “End of History”; Piketty, “Rise of Sanders”; Inglehart, “Inequality and Modernization”
- Critical Response Writing: Choose one of the previous responses and expand into a 1,000 to 1,200 word essay while incorporating one or more historical themes discussed.

WEEK 4: APRIL 27 – MAY 1 — RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE PAST

- Reading: Gorden-Reed, “America’s Original Sin”; Schell, “China’s Cover-up,” *The Woman Warrior* by Maxine Hong Kingston, Additional short story and poetry TBA
- Critical Response Writing: 400 to 500 word essay response to *The Woman Warrior* (Prompt TBA)
- Creative Writing: 400 to 500 word response (prose, poetry or prose-poetry, prompt TBA)

WEEK 5: MAY 4 – 8 — IDEOLOGICAL TENSIONS OF THE PRESENT

- Reading: Nichols, “How America lost faith in expertise”; Mead, “The Jacksonian Revolt”; Williams, “Abortion and Guns,” *The Woman Warrior* by Maxine Hong Kingston, Additional short story and poetry TBA
- Critical Response Writing: 400 to 500 word essay response to *The Woman Warrior* (Prompt TBA)
- Creative Writing: 400 to 500 word response (prose, poetry or prose-poetry, prompt TBA)

WEEK 6: MAY 11 – 15 — FACING THE FUTURE

- Reading: Friedman, *Next Hundred Years*, pp. 1-30, Additional short story and poetry TBA
- Critical Response Writing: Choose one of the previous responses and expand into a 1,000 to 1,200 word essay while incorporating one or more historical themes discussed.

WEEK 7: MAY 18 – 22 — FACING THE FUTURE

- Reading: Friedman, *Next Hundred Years*, pp. 31-87
- FINAL PORTFOLIOS: Critical Response Writing: Choose one of your 1,000-1,200 essay responses and revise for final portfolio submission.
- FINAL PORTFOLIOS: Creative Writing: Choose one of your 400-500 word creative responses and revise for final portfolio submission.

WEEK 8: MAY 25 – 29 — FACING THE FUTURE

- Reading: Friedman, *Next Hundred Years*, pp. 88-134
- FINAL PORTFOLIOS: Critical Response Writing: Continue revising your chosen essay for final portfolio submission.
- FINAL PORTFOLIOS: Creative Writing: Continue revising your chosen creative work for final portfolio submission.

WEEK 9: JUNE 1 – 5 — FINAL PORTFOLIO READINGS

- FINAL PORTFOLIOS: Critical Response Writing: Complete the revision of your chosen essay for final portfolio submission.
- FINAL PORTFOLIOS: Creative Writing: Complete the revision of your chosen creative work for final portfolio submission.

FINAL PORTFOLIO SUBMISSIONS (TO BUZZ) DUE JUNE 5 BY MIDNIGHT



CRITICAL THEORY & ANALYSIS: A VERY BRIEF PRIMER

*Critical theory refuses to identify freedom with any institutional arrangement or fixed system of thought. It questions the hidden assumptions and purposes of competing theories and existing forms of practice. It has little use for what is known as “perennial philosophy.” Critical theory insists that thought must respond to the new problems and the new possibilities for liberation that arise from changing historical circumstances. (Critical Theory: A Very Short **Introduction**)*

MORAL CRITICISM, DRAMATIC CONSTRUCTION (~360 BC-PRESENT)

In Book X of his *Republic*, Plato may have given us the first volley of detailed and lengthy literary criticism. The dialog between Socrates and two of his associates shows the participants of this discussion concluding that art must play a limited and very strict role in the perfect Greek Republic. Richter provides a nice **summary** of this point: “...poets may stay as servants of the state if they teach piety and virtue, but the pleasures of art are condemned as inherently corrupting to citizens...” (19)....

In *Poetics*, Aristotle breaks with his teacher (Plato) in the consideration of art. Aristotle considers **poetry** (and **rhetoric**), a productive science, whereas he thought **logic** and physics to be theoretical sciences, and ethics and politics practical sciences (Richter 38). Because Aristotle saw **poetry** and drama as means to an end (for example, an audience’s enjoyment) he established some basic guidelines for authors to follow to achieve certain objectives. (*Literary Theories and Schools of Criticism*)

STRUCTURALISM/SEMIOTICS (1920S-PRESENT)

An intellectual movement utilizing the methods of structural **linguistics** and structural anthropology. Where linguists, such as Ferdinand de Saussure, **study the underlying system of language rather than concrete speech events, and where anthropologists**, such as Claude Levi-Strauss, examine cultural phenomena in terms of the underlying formal systems of which they are manifestations, structuralist literary critics, such as Roland Barthes, seek not explication of unique texts but an account of the modes of literary discourse and their operation. The border separating such study of the structures of literature from **semiotics**, the study of signs, is nebulous and frequently crossed. (*A Handbook to Literature*)

FORMALISM (1930S-PRESENT)

A term applied to criticism that emphasized the form of the artwork, with “form” variously construed to mean generic form, type, verbal form, grammatical and syntactical form, **rhetorical** form, or **verse** form. (*A Handbook to Literature*)

NEW CRITICISM/NEO-ARISTOTELIAN (1930S-PRESENT)

In a strict sense the term applies to the criticism practices by John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, R. P. Blackmur, Robert Penn Warren, and Clench Brooks; it is derived from Ransom’s book *The New Criticism* (1941), which discusses a movement in America in the 1930s that paralleled movements in England led by critics such as T. S. Eliot, I. A. Richards, and William Epton.... Not even the group to which the term can be applied in its strictest sense has formed a school subscribing to a fixed dogma; when to this group are added others, such as Yvor Winters and Kenneth Burke, it can be seen that the New Criticism is really a cluster of attitudes toward literature rather than an organized critical system. The primary concern of these critics has been to discover the intrinsic worth of literature...a protest against certain conventional and traditional ways of viewing life and art. (*The*

Norton Introduction to Literature)

PSYCHOANALYTIC CRITICISM, JUNGIAN CRITICISM(1930S-PRESENT)

The emphasis in criticism on the values of symbols and language that, often unconsciously, explain meanings or unconscious intention. (*A Handbook to Literature*)

LACANIAN CRITICISM (1930S TO PRESENT)

Language as expressing absence. You use a word to represent an absent object but you cannot make it present. The word, then, **like the unconscious desire, is something that cannot be fulfilled. Language**, reaching out with one word after the other, striving for but never reaching its object, is the arena of desire. (*The Norton Introduction to Literature*)

MARXIST CRITICISM (1930S-PRESENT)

The most insistent and vigorous historicism through most of the twentieth century has been **Marxism**, based on the world of Karl Marx (1818-1883). **Marxist** criticism, like other historical critical methods in the nineteenth century, **treated literature as a passive product of the culture**, specifically of the economic aspect, and, therefore, of class warfare. **Economics**, the underlying cause of history, was thus the base, and culture, including literature and the other arts, the superstructure. Viewed from the **Marxist** perspective, the literary works of a period would, then, reveal the state of the struggle between classes in the historical **place** and moment. (*The Norton Introduction to Literature*)

READER-RESPONSE CRITICISM (1960S-PRESENT)

The conventional notion of reading is that a writer or speaker has an “idea,” encodes it that is, turns it into words—and the reader or listener decodes it, deriving, when successful, the writer or speaker’s “idea.” The reader-response critics assume, however, that such equivalency between sender and receiver is impossible. The literary work, there, does not exist on the page; that is only the text. The text becomes a work only when it is read, just as a score becomes music only when it is played. **Eric Kandel** takes this further with his theory of the “**beholder’s share**.” (*The Norton Introduction to Literature*)

FEMINIST CRITICISM (1960S-PRESENT)

Like **Marxist** criticism, **feminist** criticism derives from firm political and ideological commitments and insists that literature both reflects and influences human behavior in the larger world. **Feminist** criticism often, too, has practiced and political aims. Strongly conscious that most of recorded history has given grossly disproportionate attention to the interest, **thoughts** and actions of men, **feminist** thought endeavors both to extend contemporary attention to distinctively female concerns, ideas and accomplishments and to recover the largely unrecorded and unknown history of women in earlier times. (*The Norton Introduction to Literature*)

ECOCRITICISM (1960S TO PRESENT)

A study of the intersections between humanity and nature including focuses on the pastoral, the frontier, **gender** position, ethnicities, communities, urbanites, industrialization and technology. (*Literary Theories and Schools of Criticism*)

POSTMODERNISM/POST-STRUCTURALISM/ DECONSTRUCTION (1966-PRESENT)

For the **deconstructionist**, language consists just in black marks on a page that repeat or differ from each other and the reader is the only author, one who can find whatever can be found in, **or be made to appear in**, those detached, isolated marks. The **deconstructionist** conception of literature is thus very broad—almost any writing will do. While this may seem “subjective” in that the critical reader has great freedom, it is the object—the black marks on the blank page—that is the sole subject/object of intention/attention. Jacques Derrida, its most famous proponent, saw language and **narrative** as not an “answer” but rather a “journey” toward an impossible “truth.” The concept of *différance*, to both defer and differ, then encourages the reader to not search for what an author

intended, or even what the work intends, but rather what the reader experiences within the reading. The postmodern **deconstructionist** critic's tools, therefore, are textual analysis of the black marks on the page and how they relate to other black marks on the page. In this approach, whatever the author originally experienced or intended for the work as it was written is irrelevant. The focus is on the reader's current experience of the text as the different aspects of the text are broken down, analyzed and put back together again in order to form meaning. It might be suggested that **deconstructionism** is the most fundamental and widely applicable critical approach as it can be used both separately and as layered affect upon other critical approaches. (*The Norton **Introduction to Literature***)

GENDER/QUEER STUDIES (1970S-PRESENT)

Gender studies and **queer** theory explore issues of **sexuality**, power, and marginalized populations (woman as other) in literature and culture. Much of the work in **gender** studies and **queer** theory, **while influenced by feminist criticism**, emerges from post-structural interest in fragmented, de-centered knowledge building (Nietzsche, Derrida, Foucault), language (the breakdown of sign-signifier), and psychoanalysis (Lacan). (*Literary Theories and Schools of Criticism*)

CRITICAL RACE THEORY (1970S TO PRESENT)

Critical Race Theory, or CRT, **is a theoretical and interpretive mode that examines the appearance of race and racism across dominant cultural modes of expression. In adopting this approach**, CRT scholars attempt to understand how victims of systemic racism are affected by cultural perceptions of race and how they are able to represent themselves to counter prejudice. (*Literary Theories and Schools of Criticism*)

NEW HISTORICISM/CULTURAL STUDIES (1980S-PRESENT)

This school, influenced by structuralist and post-structuralist theories, seeks to reconnect a work with the time period in which it was produced and identify it with the cultural and political movements of the time (Michel Foucault's concept of *épistème*). New Historicism assumes that every work is a product of the historic moment that created it. Specifically, New Historicism is "...a practice that has developed out of contemporary theory, particularly the structuralist realization that all human systems are symbolic and subject to the rules of language, and the deconstructive realization that there is no way of positioning oneself as an observer outside the closed circle of textuality" (Richter 1205). (*Literary Theories and Schools of Criticism*)

NEOFORMALISM (1980S TO PRESENT)

Heavily influenced by film critique, **neoformalism** suggests that art and literature seek to defamiliarize the beholder so to defamiliarize the beholder/reader within the context of the work. (*A Handbook to Literature*)

POST-COLONIAL CRITICISM (1990S-PRESENT)

Post-colonial criticism is similar to cultural studies, but it assumes a unique perspective on literature and politics that warrants a separate discussion. Specifically, **post-colonial critics are concerned with literature produced by colonial powers and works produced by those who were/are colonized. Post-colonial theory looks at issues of power, economics**, politics, religion, and culture and how these elements work in relation to colonial hegemony (western colonizers controlling the colonized). (*Literary Theories and Schools of Criticism*)



CRITICAL RESPONSE GUIDE: ANALYSIS, SYNTHESIS, COMPOSITION & REVISION

Writing an effective critical response is simple **IF** you allow for enough **time** and give each **process** your complete focus. Think of it this way, if you were to build a house, you wouldn't throw all the materials and tools onto a pile at one time and hope that the house magically built itself, right? You would first draft a rough blueprint. Next, you would carefully consider the type of framing materials, wiring, plumbing, etc. You would create a new blueprint that is more specific to the materials. You would excavate the land, create a foundation, build the framework of the house, add the electrical and plumbing, hang drywall, and so on. Along the way, you are constantly revising the blueprint so to create a more perfect home for you and your family. By taking careful steps and focusing on each step with surgical attention, your home will be stronger, more beautiful and more functional. Writing your critical response is no different:

Example Prompt: Write a 400-500 word critical response to the novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, by Zora Neale Hurston, through the lenses of Marxist critical theory and propaganda. More specifically, how do class structure, economics and propaganda affect the main character, Janie Crawford?

ANALYSIS

Analysis is a term commonly applied to the detailed and close reading of a text, usually a short poem or prose excerpt (but can also be a music video, sculpture, etc). [A key feature of analysis is the ability to find a citation or quote within the work that supports the statement you are making.]

A Brief History of Analysis: In a modern tradition inaugurated by Laura Riding and Robert Graves in their book *A Survey of Modernist Poetry* (1927), the close reader typically attempts to account for and justify the presence of all the text's features of sound and sense, usually detecting sonic correspondences such as internal rhyme and alliteration, along with ambiguities of meaning, and the complex deployment of rhetorical figures, all integrated into a formal unity. Following the success of William Empson's book *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930), written under the influence of Riding and Graves, close reading was often cultivated in the Cambridge school of criticism, and developed most influentially in the US by the New Critics and their successors including the school of deconstruction. Various reactions against this tradition have emerged, ranging from the Chicago critics' contrary emphasis on genre and plot, to Franco Moretti's experiments with a new kind of distant reading. (*Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*)

First, ask yourself what the **keywords** or main topics are within the prompt:

Example Prompt: Write a 400-500 word critical response to the novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, by Zora Neale Hurston, through the lenses of **Marxist** critical theory and **propaganda**. More specifically, how do **class structure**, **economics** and **propaganda** affect the main character, **Janie Crawford**?

Next, analyze each keyword in isolation. This is a reverse outlining of the prompt:

- ***Their Eyes Were Watching God***: A novel written during the Harlem Renaissance (published in 1939), set in Eatonville, Florida, the first U.S. town settled by and incorporated by Black Americans.
- **Zora Neale Hurston**: Woman of color writing during the Harlem Renaissance. She was an anthropologist. She was not as popular during her lifetime as she is now.
- Marxist:
- **Class Structure**: Consider Janie's relationship to her class structure. Write a little on this in your own words. Figure out what you think about it. **For instance: Janie, as the wife of Eatonville's mayor, Joe Stark, experiences the benefits and pitfalls of being a woman in her community.**
- **Economics**: Consider Janie in relationship to her economic situation. Write a little on this in your own words. Figure out what you think about it. **For instance: Janie has money and social position as wife of the mayor; however, it does not afford her respect from her husband.**
- **Propaganda**: Finally, consider Janie in relationship to her community, Eatonville. Does Eatonville present propaganda? (Hint, what if you overlaid the critical theories, feminism and/or critical race theory from your "Critical Theory Primer," to Marxism?) Though feminist critical theory and critical race theory did not become "canon" academic studies until the 1960s and in some regions even later, we can retroactively apply their lenses to Marxism, especially since Marxism did not spend much time considering women and marginalized voices within its class and economic focuses. (Notice that I capitalize Marxism but not feminism or critical race theory. Marxism derives from Karl Marx, a proper noun, and so we capitalize the theory.) Write a little on this in your own words. Figure out what you think about it. **For instance: Upon her return from "the muck," Janie suffers gossip and objectification from the women and men of Eatonville, all of whom assume that Janie's third (younger) husband, Tea Cake, ran off with her money and left her for a younger woman.**
- **Janie Crawford**: The main character or protagonist of *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. The reader meets Janie as a young black woman coming of age. We follow her journey and relationships with three men, finally returning to Eatonville, Florida alone and a little broken in body but not spirit.

To write a coherent, organized critical response, you must first consider the key issues in **isolation**; otherwise, the information is too "big" to hold at one time.

SYNTHESIS

After you've considered the issues in isolation and written your notes, you will be able to better **synthesize** all the information into a single **cohesive thesis**. Make sure to use all the keywords within your thesis statement. This not only lets the reader know that you have fully considered the prompt, it clearly communicates the purpose of the essay. Begin the thesis drafting process slowly, by simply listing the keywords and surgical details, one after the other, in a simple, messy, lengthy sentence:

Messy Thesis: In *Their Eyes Were Watching God* written by Zora Neale Hurston, a woman of color writing during the Harlem Renaissance in 1939, Marxist criticism applies to Janie Crawford's experience with class structure (wife of the mayor), economics (rich and powerful) and propaganda (gossip and objectification) of Eatonville, Florida, the first U.S. town settled by Black Americans.

Now, fine-tune the thesis into a more elegant, surgical statement:

Surgical Thesis: In Zora Neale Hurston's novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1939), Janie Crawford—a rich, well-positioned, objectified wife of the mayor and woman of color—navigates class structure, economics and propaganda within her Eatonville, Florida, community.

Notice that the keyword, Marxist, does not appear in this surgical thesis. This is okay because the Marxist keywords, class structure and economics, designate the Marxist focus. However, you could include the Marxist in a surgical thesis, such as this:

Surgical Thesis: Through a Marxist lens, Zora Neale Hurston's novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

(1939), and main character, Janie Crawford—a rich, well-positioned, objectified mayor’s wife and woman of color—explore class structure, economics and propaganda within Eatonville, Florida, the first Black town in the United States.

In the first surgical thesis above, the protagonist, Janie, takes focus. In the second thesis, the novel and Janie take a more balanced focus. Either thesis is perfectly acceptable. There are infinite possibilities when creating your thesis. Just make sure to include all keywords in a coherent statement.

COMPOSITION

Now that you have your surgical thesis, you are ready to map out or draft your critical essay. It can be helpful to think of this drafting as a composition, as you are not only communicating logical information, you want to communicate the information with rhetorical strategy and enough narrative lyricism that the reader will want to keep reading.

At this point, you should decide if you are a messy drafter or if you prefer to take a more tactical approach. If you are a messy drafter, then just start writing your thoughts about the thesis. I suggest focusing on the body paragraphs gleaned from your thesis. You can worry about the introductory and concluding paragraphs later. Begin by writing your thesis at the top of the page then break out the main topics and find short quotes within the text to support your main topics:

Surgical Thesis: Through a Marxist lens, Zora Neale Hurston’s novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1939), and main character, Janie Crawford—a rich, well-positioned, objectified mayor’s wife and woman of color—explore class structure, economics and propaganda within Eatonville, Florida, the first Black town in the United States.

Class Structure: Well-Positioned, Objectified Mayor’s Wife and Woman of Color:

- “When it was all over that night in bed Jody asked Janie, “Well, honey, how yuh lak bein’ Mrs Mayor?”
- “It’s all right Ah reckon, but don’t yuh think it keeps us in uh kinda strain?”
- “Strain? You mean de cookin’ and waitin’ on folks?”
- “Naw, Jody, it jus’ looks lak it keeps us in some way we ain’t natural wid one ’nother. You’s always off talkin’ and fixin’ things, and Ah feels lak Ah’m jus’ markin’ time. Hope it soon gits over . . .” (Hurston 54).

Economics: Rich

- “They don’t need to worry about me and my overalls long as Ah still got nine hundred dollars in de bank . . .” (Hurston 8).

Propaganda: Gossip and Objectification:

- “Seeing the woman as she was made them remember the envy they had stored up from other times. So they chewed up the back parts of their minds and swallowed with relish. They made burning statements with questions, and killing tools out of laughs. It was mass cruelty . . .” (Hurston 1).
- “The men noticed her firm buttocks like she had grapefruits in her hip pockets; the great rope of black hair swinging to her waist and unraveling in the wind like a plume . . .” (Hurston 2).

Now that you have addressed the surgical thesis, key topics and supporting evidence (quotes from the text), you are ready to compose your messy draft. Because the organizational and evidentiary work is already there, the composition or drafting will be much easier. Be aware that the messy draft will be longer than the allotted 400-500 word limit. This is not only okay, it is necessary. While revising, you will compress and expand your essay a few times until you fully address the language, diction and surgical details. This is all part of the writing process. Make sure to leave time for proper revision; otherwise, the revision process will be frustrating.

REVISION

The fastest way to revise your critical essay is to make two hardcopies. Give one to a trusted reader and keep one for yourself. First, read the essay aloud to your partner. Next, have the partner read the essay aloud to you. While the partner is reading aloud, use a pen to make edits and notes along the way. If you are on a tight deadline, you can do this, again, after you addressed your edits.



TERMS, RHETORICAL DEVICES & MECHANICS

Body Paragraphs: Each focal idea named within the thesis statement should then have its own paragraph (at least one) in which the writer explores the focal idea in depth.

Book, Film and Artwork Titles: Longer works should be in *Italics*. Smaller works should be in “Quotation Marks.”

Commas: In academic writing, we use commas to separate clauses. Clauses have a subject and verb. In MLA, commas go inside the quotation marks.

Conclusion: The final paragraph is where the analysis synthesizes the focal “depths.” This is where a writer makes her/his/their “point.” The final sentence of the conclusion should offer some sort of catharsis (relief from strong emotion) or transcendent closure for the reader. Writers achieve this in several ways, one being to address the reader’s personal experience with the subject discussed within the paper. The writer might also briefly reflect on the opening sentence in the first paragraph.

Diction: Consider the strategic value of word choice. Is there a stronger word?

Lengthy Titles: Once you have introduced a lengthy title of a book, film, etc., you can then truncate the title so that it syntactically flows better.

MLA Format: Please be mindful of the format: Times New Roman, 12 point font, double spaced, first page header and subsequent page headers.

Omit Unnecessary Words: Our early drafts are often wordy. As we revise, one key focus is to replace phrases with one or two strategic words.

Parenthetical Citations: When citing a source use the last name and page number. Use double quotes. The period goes after the citation. “Valley of ashes . . .” (Fitzgerald 23).

Passive Voice: Passive voice is a form of “to be” with a past tense verb—i.e., The Alchemist was captured by the antagonists. An easy way to turn a passive sentence into an ACTIVE SENTENCE is to simply switch the verb-subject structure to subject-verb—i.e., The antagonists captured the Alchemist.

Prepositions: Be careful with prepositions. In academic writing, we don’t finish a sentence, clause or phrase with a preposition—i.e., on, at, with, in, etc. Prepositions begin prepositional phrases—i.e., in the store. The object of the preposition should complete the phrase. Also, if you find a sentence has two or more prepositional phrases back to back, find a way to amalgamate the phrases into a single prepositional phrase.

Proofreading: Make sure to look for the easy typos, missed spaces, etc.

Surgical Details: In early drafts, we tend to write generalized “placeholders” so to get our ideas on the page quickly. This is a fantastic strategy for early drafts; however, when we go back and revise, fleshing out the surgical details are one of our first steps toward fully realizing the piece.

Thesis Statement: The thesis statement, often the final sentence in the first paragraph, specifically states the purpose of the critical analysis. In the thesis statement, mention each focal idea with specificity.

Thought Completion: When making a statement within a body paragraph, make sure that the stated idea comes to full realization with surgical details.

Titles for Critical Analysis Papers: Titles are especially important and should communicate not only the subject of the paper (not the assignment), but also the particular slant and critical theory that the writer addresses within the paper. For instance, an interesting title for a critical analysis of *The Metamorphosis*, would be Magic Realism, Personification and Semiotics in *The Metamorphosis*.

Transitions: Transitions are tricky. They have as much to do with preceding context and words as the next. In critical responses, an introductory phrase can be an effective way to transition from one paragraph to the next.



RESEARCH & WRITING RUBRIC

Research	Beginning	Developing	Meeting	Exceeding
Integration of knowledge	Writing does not demonstrate that the author has fully understood, and applied concepts learned in the course.	Writing demonstrates that the author, to a certain extent, understands and has applied concepts learned in the course.	Writing demonstrates that the author, for the most part, understands and has applied concepts learned in the course. Some of the conclusions, however, are not supported in the body of the paper.	Writing demonstrates that the author fully understands and has applied concepts learned in the course. Concepts are integrated into the writer's own insights. The writer provides concluding remarks that show analysis and synthesis of ideas.
Topic Focus (Research Question & Thesis) (CCSSWHST 9-10.1, 9-10.7, 9-10.8)	Proposes an ineffective research question. Thesis is unclear or ineffective in resolving the question. Does not propose a research question or have a thesis.	Proposes a somewhat effective research question. Thesis may be unclear, but somewhat effective in resolving the question.	Proposes a clear and effective research question. Thesis clearly conveys an argument that resolves the question.	Proposes a pertinent research question. Thesis clearly conveys a sophisticated argument that resolves the question.
Sources (Primary and secondary sources, information from reputable sources) (CCSSWHST 9-10.7, 9-10.8, 9-10.9)	Does not include quality evidence. Sources only from search engines or from crowdsourced information platforms or forums.	Attempts to include evidence and / or data from multiple sources. Sources may be limited in scope or depth. Evidence somewhat	Includes evidence and data from a range of quality, credible, verifiable sources.	Includes evidence and data from a wide range of sophisticated, credible, verifiable sources.

	Evidence isn't credible or verifiable.	credible and verifiable.		
Depth of discussion (CCSSRI 9-10.1, 9-10.2)	Attempt to determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source while using evidence to support analysis.	Somewhat determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source and cite textual evidence for analysis.	Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source and cite specific relevant textual evidence for analysis.	Determine the central ideas or information of primary or secondary sources and cite several examples of specific and pertinent textual evidence for analysis.
Organization (logical and clear sequencing) (CNC) (CCSSWHST 9-10.4)	Aggregates materials in no logical order; no clear structure can be identified.	Attempt to make connections between a range of materials	Make reasonable connections among a range of materials and construct them in a logical way.	Make sophisticated connections among a wide range of materials and construct them in a logical way, highly interconnecting ideas in the process and current events.
Language Use (CCSSL 9-10.4, 9-10.6)	Does not attempt to use formal, academic language. Unable to use formal, academic language in a relevant or correct context.	Attempts to use formal, academic language, but may incorrectly use words or use them in an irrelevant context.	Uses a quality range of formal, academic language in a mostly relevant and correct context.	Relevantly and correctly uses a wide range of formal, academic, sophisticated language.
Writing (informative details, cohesiveness) (CCSSWHST 9-10.1, 9-10.2)	Does not tie together information. Writing does not flow and appears to be created from disparate issues. Headings are necessary to link concepts. Writing does not demonstrate understanding any relationships	Sometimes ties together information from all sources. Writing does not flow – lack of connection is apparent. Author's writing does not demonstrate an understanding of the relationship among material obtained from all sources.	For the most part, ties together information from all sources. Writing flows with only some disconnected parts. Author's writing demonstrates an understanding of the relationship among material obtained from all sources.	Ties together information from all sources. Writing flows seamlessly from one topic to the next. Author's writing demonstrates an understanding of the relationship among material obtained from all sources.
Conventions (spelling, syntax, punctuation) (CCSSL 9-10.1, 9-10.2)	Demonstrates little control of the conventions. Errors make	Demonstrates some control of the conventions with errors that	Demonstrates considerable control of the conventions	Demonstrates control of the conventions and spelling with little to no errors.

	comprehension difficult. Fails to use well-constructed syntax, consistent punctuation, or convey clear meaning.	may inhibit comprehension. Attempts to use well-constructed syntax, but may have inconsistent punctuation or have difficulty conveying meaning.	with occasional errors in spelling and grammar. Uses well-constructed syntax with mostly correct punctuation that convey clear meaning.	Uses varied, well-constructed syntax with correct punctuation that convey clear meaning.
Documentation (bibliography and citation) (CCSSWHST 9-10.7, 9-10.8, 9-10.9)	Does not provide citations. Does not provide a bibliography.	Cites some data or information from outside sources. Attempts to include a bibliography, but may only list websites or names of sources.	Cites most data obtained from outside sources. Provides a complete bibliography in MLA or APA format.	Cites all data or information obtained from outside sources in MLA or APA format. Provides a complete, correct bibliography in MLA or APA format.

References:

<https://www.cornellcollege.edu/library/faculty/focusing-on-assignments/tools-for-assessment/research-paper-rubric.shtml>

<http://www.lincolnparkboe.org/userfiles/6/Classes/1657/Research%20Paper%20Rubric.doc>

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